



The Sixty-eighth Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,787th Concert

National Gallery of Art Piano Trio

Luke Wedge, *violin*
Benjamin R. Wensel, *cello*
Danielle DeSwert Hahn, *piano*

Presented in honor of
American Modernism: The Shein Collection

May 16, 2010
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Charles Ives (1874–1954)

Piano Trio (1904/1911)

Moderato

TSIAJ

Moderato con moto

Aaron Copland (1900–1990)

Vitebsk (Study on a Jewish Theme) (1928–1929)

Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990)

Trio for Violin, Cello, and Piano (1937)

Adagio non troppo; più mosso; allegro vivace

Tempo di marcia

Largo; allegro vivo e molto ritmico

This concert is the second in a series of chamber music concerts made possible by support from The Gottesman Fund in memory of Milton M. Gottesman.

The Musicians

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART PIANO TRIO

Founded in 2008, the National Gallery of Art Piano Trio has been featured on several of the Gallery's Sunday concerts. In October 2009 the Trio performed a program of works by Belgian composers in honor of the exhibition *The Darker Side of Light: Arts of Privacy, 1850–1900*. The concert was repeated by special invitation at the residence of the Belgian ambassador.

LUKE WEDGE

Luke Wedge received a master of music degree in violin performance from Northwestern University and a bachelor of arts degree in English literature from the University of Kansas. His principal instructors included David Perry, Gerardo Ribeiro, and Ben Sayevich. Wedge has made solo and recital appearances in Chicago, Illinois; Lawrence, Kansas; and Washington, DC. He is an experienced orchestral musician and has been engaged by the National Gallery of Art Orchestra, the National Symphony, and the Ravinia Festival, among others. A member of the United States Air Force Strings, he is also a member of the Covington String Quartet.

BENJAMIN R. WENSEL

Benjamin R. Wensel holds degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music and the Eastman School of Music. He has performed in seminars and master classes for members of the Cleveland, Guarneri, Juilliard, Miami, and Ying quartets; studied chamber music with Peter Salaff and members of the Audubon and Cavani Quartets; and participated in solo master classes with Clemens Michael Hagen, Steven Isserlis, and Michel Strauss. Wensel has performed with the National Symphony Orchestra, the ProMusica Chamber Orchestra, the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra as well as with many local ensembles. A founding member of the Tarab Cello Ensemble, he performed in the premieres of more than twenty new works written by established and emerging American composers, and participated in

the ensemble's residencies at Princeton University, Stetson University, and the University of South Florida. He taught chamber music and maintained a studio at the Hochstein School of Music in Rochester, New York, where he was the cellist of the Hochstein String Quartet. Currently a member of the faculty at the Washington Conservatory, Wensel maintains a private studio in Arlington, Virginia, and plays with the newly formed Messiaen Quartet as well as the National Gallery of Art Piano Trio. He can be heard on recordings released on the Bridge, Harmonia Mundi, and Summit record labels.

DANIELLE DESWERT HAHN

Brussels-born pianist Danielle DeSwert Hahn is a freelance collaborative pianist and coach and the music program specialist at the National Gallery of Art. She has worked as a pianist and coach with the Ash Lawn Highland Opera Festival, Chautauqua Opera, Indianapolis Opera, Kentucky Opera, the New Orleans Opera Association, Portland (Oregon) Opera, the San Francisco Opera Center, Sarasota Opera, and the Washington National Opera. From 2004 to 2006 she was the principal répétiteur with the Baltimore Opera Company and Washington Concert Opera. Much in demand as a collaborative pianist, she performs regularly in instrumental and voice recitals, including performances at the Arts Club of Washington, the Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington, the Kennedy Center, the Mexican Institute of Culture, the National Gallery, the Russian Embassy, and the White House. She is principal pianist with the Inscape Chamber Music Project. The recipient of a master of music degree from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, where she studied with Martin Katz, and a bachelor of music degree from the University of California, Santa Barbara, Hahn also studied with Warren Jones and Anne Epperson at the Music Academy of the West and was an apprentice coach with the Washington Opera, working with Plácido Domingo.

Program Notes

Though the modernist movement in music did not take hold among composers in the United States until the 1920s, Charles Ives was already composing music that could be classified as modernist as the twentieth century turned, albeit in relative obscurity. It was not until a decade after his death in 1954 that his music was taken seriously. His wife, Harmony Twitchell Ives (1876–1979), described the *Piano Trio* in lieu of a program note in a letter dated April 22, 1948:

“...there was a copy of the program notes—but we can’t find them...the Trio was, in a general way, a kind of reflection or impression of his college days on the Campus now 50 years ago. The 1st movement recalled a rather short but serious talk, to those on the Yale fence, by an old professor of Philosophy—the 2nd, the games and antics by the Students on the Campus, on a Holiday afternoon, and some of the tunes and songs of those days were partly suggested in this movement, sometimes in a rough way. The last movement was partly a remembrance of a Sunday service on the campus—Dwight Hall—which ended near the ‘Rock of Ages.’ It was composed mostly in 1904, but fully completed in 1911. Mr. Ives doesn’t think it was ever played in a public concert—but it was in a private concert some 30 years ago. He isn’t quite sure about the TSIAJ over the second movement—he thinks it hardly anything but a poor joke...”

Her last comment refers to the letters in the title of the second movement, which are an acronym for “This Scherzo Is a Joke.”

Listeners who instantly recognize Aaron Copland’s open, tuneful, and distinctly American style in works such as *Billy the Kid*, *Appalachian Spring*, and *Rodeo* are surprised to hear a completely different sound in *Vitebsk* (*Study on a Jewish Theme*), one of his early and more unusual compositions. Vitebsk is the name of a Russian village that was home to the playwright Shloyme Zanol Rappoport (1863–1920), whose pen name was S. Ansky. In 1914 he authored the play, *The Dybbuk*. Though Copland borrowed from American folk tunes regularly in his compositions, he rarely used Jewish themes, and never returned to the practice after completing *Vitebsk* in 1929.

A particularly unusual feature of this work, especially for Copland, is the use of quarter tones in the cello and violin. His evocation of the shofar, the ceremonial ram's horn blown in Jewish services, is one aspect of life in the "shtetl" (village) that he hoped to convey. The stark, strident chords in the piano as well as the frenetic scalar passages featured in the development, further portray the difficult lives of the inhabitants of the region known as "White Russia."

Like the Ives piano trio, Leonard Bernstein's *Trio for Violin, Cello, and Piano* dates from the composer's days at college—in this case Harvard—where he studied piano with Heinrich Gebhard and composition with Walter Piston. In September 1936 Bernstein was in Maine. As one of his fellow students, Mildred Spiegel, recalls, "He borrowed the farmer's truck and drove to the Emerson House at York Harbor where I was playing with my trio. I was delightfully surprised." Apparently, the visit gave Bernstein the inspiration to begin writing a trio, and he completed it in 1937 at age nineteen.

The first movement opens with a sad melody that is played first by the solo cello, then by the two strings in a semi-canonic restatement, and finally by the piano. The melody is transformed in various ways until the tempo quickens and the mood becomes more emphatic. The movement ends with a slow restatement of the opening melody, which begins in a unison fortissimo but gradually becomes a whisper. A jazzy feel permeates the second movement, a set of variations on a theme characterized by "blue" notes. The third movement, *Largo; allegro vivo e molto ritmico*, opens with the strings playing solemnly, but quickly moves into a faster tempo. Flashes of melody from the first and second movements return: syncopations and *pizzicati* play a role in the development of the theme. After a dramatic cello solo, Bernstein closes the work with an emphatic coda punctuated by a joyful glissando on the piano.

Program notes on Ives and Copland by Danielle DeSwert Hahn, music program specialist, National Gallery of Art

Program notes on Bernstein by Stephen Ackert, head of the music department, National Gallery of Art

Next Week at the National Gallery of Art

National Gallery of Art Chamber Players

Kathleen Trahan, *soprano and alto recorders*

Alicia Kosack, *Baroque flute*

Stephen Ackert, *harpsichord*

Music by Bull, Luyton, Scheidt, and
other seventeenth-century composers

Presented in honor of
Hendrick Avercamp: The Little Ice Age

May 19, 2010
Wednesday, 12:10 pm
West Building, West Garden Court



Teiber String Trio

Music by Johann Sebastian Bach

May 23, 2010
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

For the convenience of concertgoers the Garden Café remains open for light refreshments until 6:00 pm on Sundays.

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